

# REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2290

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2290.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2241

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT) at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.)

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

## CONCERNS REGARDING RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, we here in the Congress have just returned to conduct the Nation's business, and our

hearts are with the families and individuals who have lost loved ones and are scattered across this country as a result of the terrible, terrible devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The House of Representatives this evening met with the President's Cabinet for nearly 3 hours, and this evening I would like to address concerns regarding how the institutions of this Nation failed the American people and what can be done about it as we try to heal as a Nation and thank those who are extending their compassion and assistance and to try to give strength to those who have suffered so much. There is not a single American who does not feel just horrible about what has happened, and we in the Congress bear responsibility, as does this administration, for the response and its shortcomings.

There is a story today in the Wall Street Journal entitled: "Behind Poor Katrina Response, a Long Chain of Weak Links." I would like to enter that into the RECORD and read from a key section of that article that talks about what went wrong.

□ 2245

Number one, the absorption of the Federal Emergency Management Agency into the gargantuan and terrorism-focused Department of Homeland Security, which I voted against as a Member of this Congress over 2 years ago; I served on the Committee on Appropriations where FEMA came before us. We had an agency that finally worked after 10 years of reform in the Clinton administration, and James Lee Witt, the director of that agency, did such a terrific job. All of that changed as FEMA was subsumed under this gargantuan Department of Homeland Security, which in essence had a very different kind of mission.

Just 2 weeks ago, as the Wall Street Journal article recounts, five State emergency managers brought a tough message here to Washington, this was before Katrina, and met with Michael Chertoff, the Homeland Security Secretary. And these emergency directors told them straight out that the administration was weakening emergency management with potentially dangerous consequences. In fact, Dave Liebersback, the Director of Alaska's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said that the Department's focus on terrorism was undermining its readiness here at home.

The article goes on to say that there were not firm procedures in place, for example, for directing people and materials when a national emergency such as Katrina would strike. And this article, along with other information that I choose to enter into the record this evening, shows that the appropriations for the funding of FEMA, as part of this major new department, were actually cut by over \$600 million in the area of regional operations. These are bad decisions that need to be reversed.

The American people and we here in this Congress must do this.

A few years ago, when the Department of Homeland Security was being debated here in the Congress, I stated, and reread for the record tonight, "I do not want FEMA put in the Department of Homeland Security. Why? Because FEMA worked. It took us 10 years to fix FEMA back during the decades of the 1990s, so why do we want to stick FEMA into this big new department that will have 170,000 people in it, and we cannot even get direct communications up to the top? The United States fought World War II, and we did not need a Department of Homeland Security. We defeated the Communists during the Cold War, and we didn't need a 170,000-person Department of Homeland Security. We fought the Persian Gulf War, and we did not need it."

But our words were not successful here in the Congress. And we ended up with a majority of Members of Congress passing a Department of Homeland Security that buried FEMA far underneath this mammoth administrative structure. I hate to call it a management structure because it became a mismanagement structure. And then funding for local responses was cut by over \$600 million.

Interestingly, the Web site of the current Committee on Homeland Security here in the U.S. House of Representatives indicates a vacancy in the chairmanship, with the movement of Mr. Cox of California to the Securities and Exchange Commission. So even one of the key committees here in the House lacks the key chair as we move into this difficult period.

But the point is that there has been very bad decision making here in the Congress that relegated FEMA in terms of domestic affairs, and also, those put in charge over the last 5 years have had absolutely no hands-on experience with emergency management.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned previously, the articles I referred to earlier are submitted hereafter for inclusion in the RECORD.

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

Some reasons why the U.S. didn't adequately protect and rescue its citizens from a natural disaster.

The absorption of the Federal Emergency Management Agency into the gargantuan—and terrorism-focused—Department of Homeland Security.

A military stretched by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which made commanders reluctant to commit some active-duty units nearby.

A total breakdown of communications systems.

Missteps at the local level, including a rudimentary plan to deal with hurricanes.

A failure to plan for the possibility that New Orleans's levee system would fail.